Merceau-like, flaunts the exact art
of mirroring one’s match. Part mime,
part ham (though not to predators),
it can approximate the state

of a curled sea anemone
if an enemy gives it chase,
extending its faux tentacles
coquettishly, as if to tease

or transfuse poison. Down below,
relation is forged in instants,
and it must shed the self swiftly
to become a foe: an army

of flowering snakes or a ray’s
alter ego. With its body
embracing the other,
it finds itself safest in acts

of correspondence: the traffic
in identity, the sudden
incipience of encounter,
when a signal gives birth to form.